

August 1996

Meet the Designers of Our New “Work of Art”

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Since UFMCC and MCC Los Angeles have achieved ownership of the buildings in West Hollywood one of the most asked questions following this landmark event is how long will it take for renovations and move-in. While these timelines will primarily be driven by availability of funds, and as preparations for the next phase of capital fundraising begin, it is a great time to introduce

COVER STORY NATHAN MECKLEY

two individuals who are central to the building project — architects Sharon Landa and Cary Stevens.

In September of 1995 the Joint Ownership Policies Committee, on behalf of UFMCC and MCC Los Angeles, contracted with the architectural partnership of Landa/Stevens to develop a master plan and design development for the two buildings. Landa/Stevens came highly regarded with glowing recommendations. While not personally involved in an MCC,

they knew of our work and immediately brought great enthusiasm and commitment to the task. With more than 30 years of combined professional experience, Sharon Landa

and Cary Stevens have been architectural partners for seven years. Based in West Hollywood, many of their individual clients are well-known entertainment celebrities:

Richard Dreyfuss, Helen Reddy, Richard Simmons, Jaqueline Bissett, Herb Ross, and Julia Louis-Dreyfus, to name a few; and corporate clients Chartoff-Winkler Productions, the Bank of Los Angeles, and Casablanca Records. Their award-winning designs have been featured in more than 50 publications including *Architectural Digest*, *Interior Design Magazine*, *House Beautiful*,

House & Garden, *Designer's West*, *Money Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The New York Times*. Not only have Landa/Stevens brought great design expertise to the project,

their wisdom and experience of the politics of building in West Hollywood has been crucial in our successful applications for permits for parking and building use.

They have energetically been engaged in each facet of the project and are in every respect professional and a pleasure to work with.

Recently, Cary and Sharon were asked to discuss their design approach and experience of the UFMCC/MCCLA project. “There’s no question that we would have preferred to start with an empty lot,” Sharon stated. “It’s more challenging to do a remodel because you’re dealing with rigid realities. This project tests everything we know about

design.” As a joint project of a church and denomination which share similar values and history, and continue to have intimate connections, they were faced with the

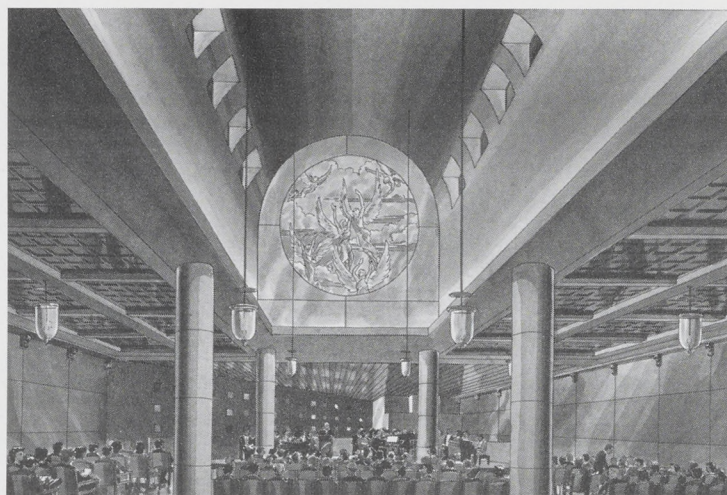


■ **Architecture as art** is the craft of Landa/Stevens, renowned for numerous Southern California creations.



Tree of Life MCC, Ypsilanti Michigan, raised over \$1,400 for the Aid for AIDS Walkathon. They also had a float in the Michigan Pride Parade. • **Good Shepherd Parish and Church of the Resurrection MCC** joined together on a float for the Chicago Pride Parade. **Rev. Wayne Bradley** once again officiated at a community-wide union service. • **Rev. Lin Stoner** and **Carole Hoke** are involved with a group of 30 other ministers in western Michigan, asking Christians to fully accept gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons into their churches. The group represents 18 churches with over 9000 members (Methodist, UCC, Presbyterian, and MCC).

• **Redeemer MCC** raised over \$1,400 at a yard sale and was instrumental in organizing the first-ever Pride Picnic in Flint Michigan. They also have a Blessing of the Animals Service planned for this month. • Interim Pastoral Leader **Cindy Long**, MCC of the High Country, Boone North Carolina, has been invited to prepare a series of radio devotionals which aired on WATA, Boone. • **Christ Covenant MCC**, Atlanta, Georgia, was scheduled to close escrow on its new sanctuary on July 25. • **Rev. Mel White**, Minister of Justice for UFMCC, brought the morning message at **First MCC**, Atlanta, Georgia, on Pride Sunday June 30th at 9 a.m. • **MCC New York** made history in the New York state senate chamber on June 4th. **Rev. Pat Bumgardner** became the first openly gay clergyman to give the opening prayer in the state senate after accepting the invitation from Senator Franz S. Leichter of Manhattan. Rev. Bumgardner reportedly raised the bowed heads of many senators when she mentioned the words God, courage, homophobia, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender families all in one prayer. • **Rev. Phyllis Motta** has resigned as pastor of **MCC of Paducah**, Kentucky. • **Rev. Elder Wilhelmina Hein** has announced to **MCC in Christchurch** that she intends to move to the Netherlands. • Prayers are requested for **Rev. Sylvanus Maduka** and all MCC people in Nigeria, for the development of an outreach to **Durban, South Africa**, and for the faith community of **Eduardo Antonetti**, founding member of **MCC Buenos Aires**. • Six people from Global Outreach areas will participate at Leadership Conference including **Linda and Susan Bekker** from South Africa, **Alejandro Soria** from Argentina. **Rev. Jorge Sosa** and **Guillermo Reyna** from Mexico and **Pablo Navarro** from Puerto Rico. This marks the very first time our delegation from Mexico will be funding their own travel to a conference!



■ **Left**— Artist's rendering of the sanctuary of MCC Los Angeles, incorporating a second-story barrel vault. **Below**— The courtyard area will feature a wall of water and the memorial wall.

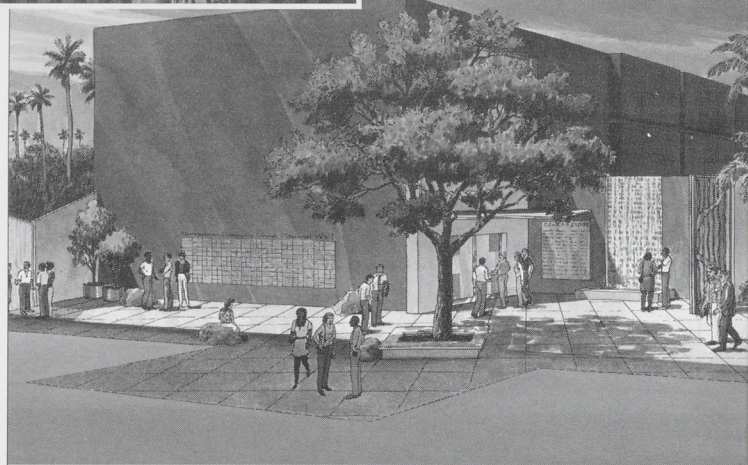
challenge of tying together two buildings that do not match.

"These buildings were not designed to be together. In order to achieve the strong sense of place MCC needs in this prominent location, we hoped to achieve an impact of meaning and cohesion in the way the buildings fit together. They should look like they were born of the same mother." Sharon describes their solution: "The epiphany for us came when we realized we could unite the buildings by cladding the bottom of both with a 14-foot facade creating a flowing wall with bold color."

Several unifying factors are achieved in this approach. By highlighting the shared facade with striking color they were able to "give up" the rest of the buildings. The disparity of building height is diffused through unity of color and materials and a uniform emphasis at the new base. The facade also naturally creates a shared courtyard. Gates designed for this courtyard are becoming increasingly important as both an art piece and a magnificent shared entry to both buildings. As a further step, the building MCC Los Angeles is to occupy would have shown a plain one-story, flat surface facing the street above the new base. Using the square shape of the MCC Chi Ro cross they planted a red block cruciform on the exterior. Both bold and subtle, it adds the texture of another visual plane and helps strengthen and transform a for-



"Being a gay man and woman in practice together, we bring an interesting perspective to this project."



mer retail building, now to be occupied by a church. Sharon Landa reflected by saying, "Design is really about perception — about change in impact. Many people that have never before noticed or have driven past thousands of times will think these are new buildings!"



"This is our community. And we are proud to be speaking for them through the language of design."

Landa/Stevens have shown considerable creativity in designing the exterior, but the interior spaces present even more challenges. In reference to the MCC Los Angeles building Cary Stevens remarked, "we're taking a virtual warehouse with ceilings that are too low, of unfinished character, with odd-angled walls, and existing structural columns and, through design renovation, we are creating a sanctuary. It has ultimately proved very exciting." Perhaps the most notable problem was that the proposed sanctuary area needed more height, more volume of space, and a sense of lift. This will be bril-

liantly achieved by opening a central section of the existing first floor ceiling, creating a sanctuary ceiling arching upward into a two-story barrel vault.

"The vault is an ancient form," Cary stated, "and we believe that

this approach is the solution to creating an interior space that will feel spiritual and convey a sense of calm and connection to something bigger and more powerful."

The first floor of the UFMCC building will house an international visitor's center, including a bookstore, and the Edith Allen Perry Memorial Chapel. Currently a parking garage, the future visitor's center will have an airy indoor-outdoor feeling with a wall of windows facing the courtyard. One may view the wall of water, memorial wall and other features of the exterior courtyard while enjoying the contemporary furnishings, international emphasis and interactive technology of the visitors center interior. Entering through the visitor's center, the chapel will feel quite different than the church sanctuary next door. A smaller sacred space dedicated to parents who have unconditionally loved their children, the chapel is described by Sharon as "more introspective. Quiet and understated."

Commenting on their obvious enthusiasm for the project, both Cary and Sharon consider this a wonderful opportunity for several

reasons. Cary shared, "being a gay man and woman in practice together, we bring an interesting and important perspective to this particular building project." Sharon added, "Santa Monica Boulevard is a landmark street and this is a landmark location in the heart of our community. We're creating a sacred place on Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood which has no church on this central thoroughfare. This is an opportunity to say, 'Look at me!'"

"This," Sharon says, "is a great opportunity to design a public space where so many people we know will be going ... It's our community. We are proud to be speaking for them through the language of design."

GLOBAL OUTREACHGERMANY

MCC Service at Nazi Camp Site

Hamburg Pride Week was opened by an MCC service in a former Nazi concentration camp. At the beginning of the Pride Week in Hamburg, MCC Hamburg had its 8th annual worship service in the former concentration camp of Hamburg-Neuengamme. At this concentration camp many gay men were killed during the Nazi period. Approximately sixty people attended the service which commemorated the gay people who suffered during the Nazi regime.

The worship was followed by the presentation of a plaque describing the plight of gays in Nazi Germany. Several gay groups and a member of the Hamburg parliament participated.

■ **The exciting master plan** for use of the new building includes an international visitors center.

Guests and officials alike were deeply moved. This plaque will help remind people about the inhuman events so that they will never happen again.

DISTRICTSNORTH CAROLINA

St. Jude's Ministry Front Page News

On the front page of the Lifestyle section of the *Sunday Star-News* in Wilmington, North Carolina, a very positive story appears about St. Jude's MCC's AIDS ministry. Accompanied by four color photos of worship, the church's quilt, and Pastor Kathi Beall, the article praises St. Jude's for providing badly-needed resources for persons living with HIV/AIDS in New Hanover County. St. Jude's AIDS ministry program is called CARE: Coastal AIDS Resource Effort. Through financial assistance to persons living with HIV/AIDS, CARE has provided new brake pads for the car of a couple who are expecting a baby shortly, have sent an HIV-positive high school senior to the prom, and have picked up the pieces when other agencies and churches have turned people with HIV away. They provide groceries, transportation, and medicines.

CARE threw a 31st birthday party for a young man who was not supposed to live to 25 because of HIV infection. With 70 members, and an additional 100 people who attend St. Jude's MCC functions, their HIV/AIDS ministry has brought them visibility, positive recognition, and a lot of new members walking through their doors.

Kathi Beall reports to UFMCC that there have been absolutely "no negative reactions" to the very positive article in the Wilmington newspaper.

CARE is less than a year old, and is hosting its first major benefit, "An Evening with William Strickland and Friends," hoping to raise \$20,000 for their continuing work. James B. Hunt, the Governor of North Carolina, and Don Betz, the Mayor of Wilmington, both sent supportive, congratulatory letters to CARE for their efforts in providing services.

St. Jude's saw the void in services for persons with HIV/AIDS in their area, and are busy filling it. Kathi says that the rewards far outweigh the efforts they have put into their AIDS ministry.

DISTRICTTEXAS

Dallas Church Makes New York News

Acclaimed architect Philip Johnson was featured recently in a *New York Times* article by Herbert Muschamps, discussing his design for a new sanctuary for the Cathedral of Hope Metropolitan Community Church in Dallas. The following is an excerpt from this article:

The architect's 90th birthday finds him at work on one of the most ambitious jobs of his career: the Cathedral of Hope, a 2,000-seat house of worship commissioned by the Dallas branch of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, the nation's largest gay and lesbian religious denomination.

But Johnson's design for the Cathedral of Hope, which is likely to take years to build because of its size and the need to raise money for its construction, at least gives his impatience a striking visual form. The building tilts, leans and meanders. It refuses

to stand up straight. The floor plan resembles a pattern quilt makers call the Drunkards's Path. The doors resemble wind-torn flaps in a carnival tent. The white concrete walls list to the left, to the right, until at point over the sanctuary, they soar.

We read meanings into buildings, whether or not architects intend to put them there. That's one of the

MEMORIAM

We Remember . . .

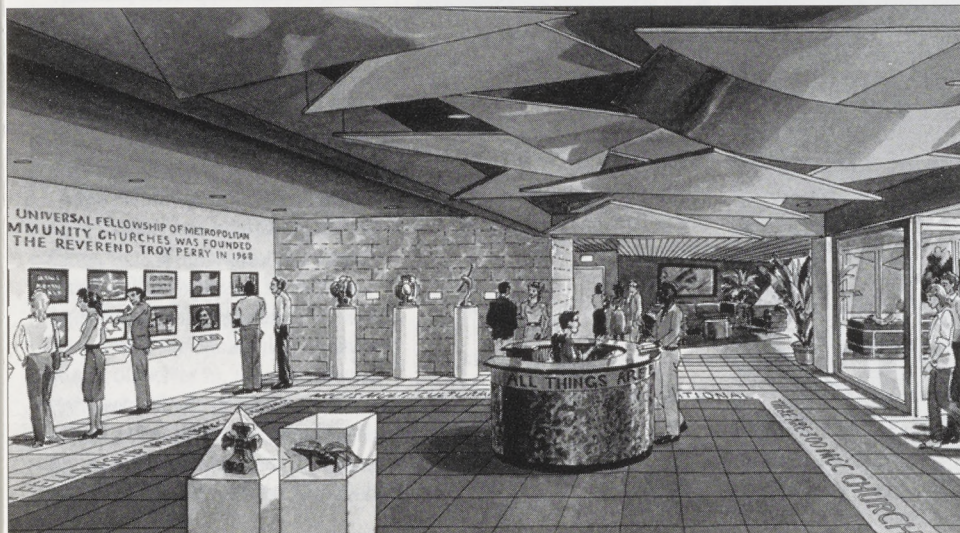
Rev. Herbert Evans died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 27, 1996. Rev. Evans served Metropolitan Community Churches in Long Beach, Philadelphia, and Washington DC. He served the denomination on the UFMCC Judiciary Committee, and represented UFMCC on the U.S. Council of National Religious AIDS Networks and the U.S. AIDS National Interfaith Network. He was always a very active supporter of UFMCC AIDS Ministry.

Rev. Evans received his Bachelor's Degree from Wilberforce University in Ohio, and was originally ordained in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He is survived by his partner Todd Conway, and by twin teen-age children. Services for the family were held in Cleveland, Ohio. A memorial service will be held at MCC Washington DC on August 24, and at MCC Long Beach, California at a date to be announced.

Rev. Evans requested that donations in his memory be made to UFMCC AIDS Ministry.

Lyllias (Mother) Hubbs passed away on Saturday, May 11. "Mother" Hubbs was 90 years old, born October 4, 1905 in Namaimo, British Columbia, Canada. She moved to California in 1919 and lived there until her recent death. She was a member of MCC San Francisco, where she served as a deacon. Later she joined MCC Golden Gate and served there as a deacon as well. She is remembered by many for her participation at UFMCC general conferences. She would usually room with Edith Allen Perry, mother of Rev. Elder Troy Perry.

She referred to her son Jack's partner, Rev. Elder Jim Sandmire, as "son-in-law." She is survived by her children, Jack Hubbs, Richard Hubbs, Ellen Pinrod and Elaine Orton, fifteen grandchildren and 31 great grandchildren.



privileges that makes architecture a public art. And the formal mutability of Johnson's cathedral takes on a particular meaning from the congregation it will house. As a congregation of lesbians and gay men, the Metropolitan Community Church has a social and psychological as well as a spiritual mission. It ministers not only, or even primarily to the needs of gay people for self acceptance; for the wisdom to perceive that gay men and lesbians are integral to society, not alien from it. —*New York Times*, July 7, 1996

The Cathedral of Hope celebrates its 26th anniversary July 28th with a kickoff for its building fund.

HONORS HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Human Rights Campaign Honors Rev. Perry

Rev. Troy Perry has been selected to receive the 1996 Human Rights Campaign Equal Rights Award. He is being honored for his commitment to fairness, dedication to equal treatment of all people, and zealous and remarkably successful efforts to help everyone better understand gays and lesbians.

Rev. Perry stated, "I am deeply honored by the award and look forward to sharing with gay brothers and sisters who will be in attendance to this first-ever gay and lesbian political convention." The award is scheduled to be conferred at the Human Rights Campaign's first lesbian and gay political convention, OUTVOTE '96, at a gala awards dinner in Chicago. The Human Rights Campaign works for lesbian and gay equal rights.

OOOPS! SORRY!

Correction

We inadvertently left Helene Loper off the ordination list published in last month's issue. Helene is from the Gulf Lower Atlantic District.

JUSTICE ECUMENICAL CALL

Congress Lobbied by Church Leaders

Twenty-nine of the United States' top church leaders called on Congress to increase the U.S. commitment to global poverty eradication in part by shifting funds from U.S. military spending.

"The growing separation between those who have plenty and those who have almost nothing is both a sign of moral collapse and a profound threat to the world's peace and security," the church leaders warned. In a letter to Senators, they urged a shift away from defense spending and a reallocation of resources within the U.S. foreign aid program to increase assistance to poor countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The joint statement came as the Senate took up debate on defense spending, with deliberation on foreign aid appropriations expected to follow. The letter was signed by the heads of twenty-nine protestant, Roman Catholic and orthodox churches and religious orders. Rev. Paul Sherry, president of the United Church of Christ, was one of the signers. Rev. Sherry has been a speaker at the UFMCC General Conference in the past.

DISTRICTS SOUTH CENTRAL

South Central District Breaks Ground

Early Friday morning, June 14th, Kay McClellan, administrative assistant to the South Central District, and the South Central District Committee gathered with their architect to celebrate a "red ribbon cutting" and ground breaking which launched their



GLOBAL OUTREACH REV. JUDY DAHL

The Faces of Freedom

Freedom wears a familiar face among humankind. No matter the color or the language, the face of freedom is hard to see, or wear inside a closet!

A Press release swept across the globe from Solidarity 96:

■ **Pitching in to** break ground for the new South Central District building project are, from left, Rev. Ed Paul, Kay McClellan, and Davis Raley.

■ **First gay and lesbian pride march** ever were held in Manila recently. MCC Manila played an central, visible role in the festivities, and the exposure and press coverage in the area was extensive.

building project in the Houston Heights.

This project was made possible by the late Dr. Tom Reveley. Five years ago, Dr. Reveley, a long term treasurer and secretary for the district, deeded his home to the district to be used as a home office. With Dr. Reveley's death in 1995, the district inherited funds to be used for property improvements.

Recently the City of Houston Planning Commission approved a design and layout for the construction of two townhomes, one which will be sold and the other retained by the district as its home office. Mr. J. Davis Raley, a local architect and member of MCC of the Resurrection has been contracted as the builder.



Lesbians and gays unite. The lesbian and gay community in the Philippines joined the rest of the world in celebrating lesbian and gay pride during a solidarity march on June 22, 1996, Saturday, 4:00 pm at the Remedios Circle, Malate, Manila. Marching in the parade were over 50 organizations led by CLIC, Gantimpala Theater Foundation, Gay Forum, Hair Watch, Kabalik, Likhaan, Metropolitan Community Church, Progay, Remedios AIDS Foundation, Queenly Queens, Sama Kami, Sining Kayumangging Royal Family, The Library Foundation, Wedpro, Women's Media Circle and Zone.

The celebration culminated with a cultural show at the Remedios Circle. Invited performers are Grace Nono, Allan K., Arnel Ignacio, Philip Lazaro, Blue Cafe, and many other gay and lesbian performers. A joint statement of solidarity was issued during the show and street dancing followed. The show was hosted by Bernardo Bernardo and directed by Tony Espejo.

This event was organized by ReachOut AIDS Education Foundation in cooperation with the Department of Tourism, the City of Manila, the Ermita and Malate Business Association, DKT International, Insomnia Cafe, Friends of New Beginnings, The Library Sing-along Bar, Blue Cafe and Asia Brewery.

Edgar Mendoza, the lay pastor of MCC Manila reports: "It was a very successful event which landed in almost all newspapers in



town. MCC Manila delivered the invocation which ended with a rendition of the song 'Amen' by the choir. At this event MCC Manila launched the Gay 1996 (Gay Awareness Year) with the theme 'I am gay and I am your neighbor' which we continuously chanted during the march. People were commenting that we are the only group that is composed of gays and lesbians which they say is good because other groups were either a gay group or lesbian group only. The march ended with disco dancing, literally 'dancing in the street' to the tune of 'We Are Family.' It was fun. Participants and curious on-lookers all danced through the night.

"The press coverage for almost all the groups featured in the papers ended with the event. But not MCC Manila. The next day, Sunday of June 23, we were 'ambush interviewed' during our service. We were invaded by TV cameras and crews and TV writers. I realized that I have made my first national public appearance.

"I'm all out. I feel freer, but with some apprehensions. Up to this writing, I still get calls from the TV press for talk shows. I feel like I was brought to the war, but can't see where the battlefield is. I need all your prayers."

One of the groups in Manila is CLIC an acronym for Can't Live In the Closet Inc. A compelling name as I consider the cliques we form in society. As gay and lesbian folks, we often have drawn the circle to keep others out, or ourselves in. It makes me feel so proud to know MCC Manila is seen by others in Manila as a group for both gay men and lesbians. No doubt there are bisexuals and transgendered folks

among them as well, some who may be in the closet yet themselves.

Edgar reminds us, perhaps without being aware of it himself, how vital it is for us to swing wide the many closet doors of our lives to make room for each other. I am reminded again how rich our diversity and how common our needs. Some of us in the UFMCC have been pounding the streets of our countries wearing the faces of freedom and insisting others see us and know us and make room for us for a very long time. Others, like those in Manila, are venturing out for the first time in their life. Still others have not yet heard the song ... We are Family.

When these photos came across my desk last week and when I looked deep into the faces of our sisters and brothers holding the banners—MCC MANILA, I AM GAY AND I AM YOUR NEIGHBOR—I recognized you and I, remembered my first gay pride march, and I knew again how good it is to belong to the UFMCC CLIC! And how terribly important it is for us to keep all the doors and windows wide open for the many who still want to hear our song. And to wear the face of freedom

HONORSALASKA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

MCC Member Selected for Convention

Dan Carter, a member of the Lamb of God Metropolitan Community Church was among the 27 people selected to represent Alaska Democrats at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois the last week of August. Dan will also attend a meeting of the Democratic Party's Standing Committee on Rules in Pittsburgh the first week of August as the sole representative for the State of Alaska.

Dan has been a member of UFMCC for eight years, having first attended a Gay Pride service at St. Luke's MCC in Jacksonville, Florida when he was on vacation about 10 years ago. He is currently the chair of the Pastoral Search Committee and has recently been appointed to the Church Board and serves as church treasurer. He is the co-chair of EQUAL (Equality Under Alaskan Law), which—with over 1,150 members—is Alaska's largest predominantly L/B/G/T political education group.

Many of you may know Dan from the Internet (alaskadan@aol.com). He encourages any delegates or MCC



DOING JUSTICE

Rev. Mel White

Pride Without Borders

For a dozen years, I stood in the shadows during Pride Week, watching God's lesbian and gay children celebrate their sexuality, wishing I could join in that celebration. From a distance, I cheered secretly the boys in bikinis, the dykes on bikes, and the elegant, bearded man in high heels and chiffon. I longed to step down from the curb and join Troy Perry, marchers from the UFMCC, and other lesbigay churches, synagogues, and spirit groups. When ACT-UP walked by wearing "silence=death" T-shirts, I wondered if I would ever have the courage to take my own stand against the religious and political extremists. And every time a P-FLAG parent walked by, I blinked back tears, fearing what my family might say if they knew the truth about me.

For a quarter-of-a-century, I believed sincerely that my homosexual desires were both sick and sinful. Then, hiding in the back row of a humble, little MCC sanctuary in North Hollywood, California, I heard the good news. "Your homosexuality is a gift from God," said Ken Martin, my first MCC pastor. "Embrace it. Celebrate it. And live it with integrity." Through Ken, I learned that the passion burning inside me was not a fire to be extinguished but an amazing source of heat and light and power.

Almost immediately, I discovered other personal borders that had to be crossed. Nancy Wilson and other lesbian sisters took me by the hand to lead me across the barrier of white, male, privilege into a vision of the new community they hoped we could build together. New bisexual and transgendered friends helped me dump the old ignorance and bigotry I still carried about the splendid varieties of human sexuality. I learned that celebrating my homospirituality was as important as celebrating my homosexuality and that all my new sisters and brothers, even the agnostics and the atheists among us, were on spiritual journeys not unlike my own. And ironically, it wasn't until I accepted my own gay-spirit that I discovered soul force, the militant non-violent way to do justice based on the teachings of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Jesus, the radical young Jew who loved prostitutes, lepers and outcasts and hated the hypocrisy and false teachings of the religious political extremists.

This year on Pride Sunday in Los Angeles, I rode down Santa Monica Blvd in a shiny black convertible with "Man of the Year" written on the side. My partner, Gary Nixon, and my son, Michael, rode beside me trying to teach me to wave "like a queen." As we passed our new UFMCC headquarters building, I was surprised to see elders and staffers cheering and waving signs of love and support. In the bleachers nearby, Tom Cole, Ken Martin's life partner, led another MCC delegation cheering and throwing tortillas. Above them all I heard a familiar voice shouting "We love you, Mel." It was Troy Perry, leaning dangerously from the balcony to cheer me on. Whatever the architects do to our existing new headquarters, it will always be for me a picture of Christ's body, the church, the place where our founder leans dangerously from the balcony to cheer us on.

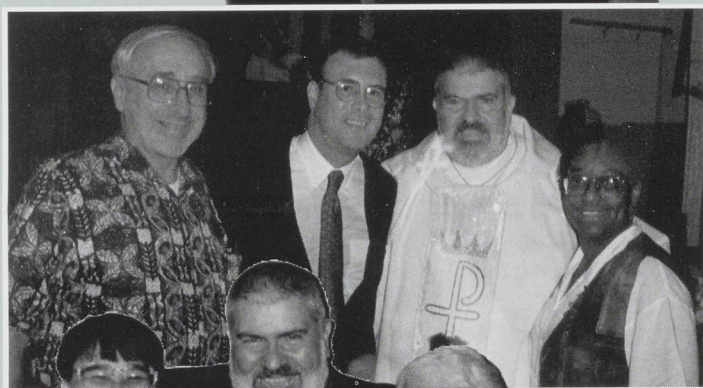
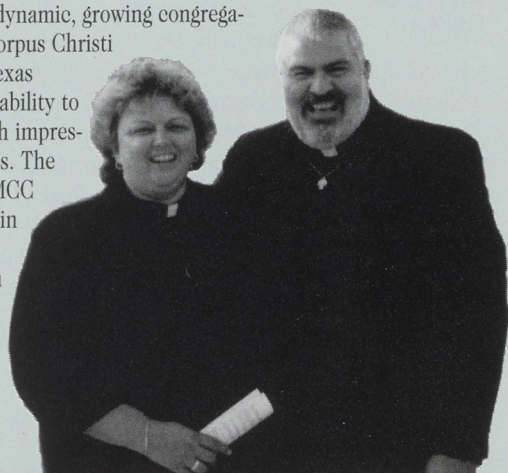
How ironic, after all those years standing in the shadows, I was riding in a place of honor when the very people who deserve the credit for my emancipation were in the bleachers cheering. And above the happy scene, I felt the loving presence of Jesus, surrounded by that great cloud of friends who also helped lead me towards freedom but never lived to see that day. Their tears of pride and gratitude mingled with my own.

Greetings from the Road ...

Rev. Troy Perry continues his tour of the Fellowship as the Capital Campaign moves into Phase Two of its efforts. Now that escrow has closed and the building belongs to UFMCC/MCCLA, the Capital Campaign has set its sights on retiring the entire debt of the building, plus raising funds to complete the build-out of the master plan.

Recently, three dynamic, growing congregations in Houston, Corpus Christi and San Antonio, Texas demonstrated their ability to share the vision with impressive gifts and pledges. The total pledged from MCC of the Resurrection in Houston was the largest amount from any single MCC church to date.

■ **Right**—Rev. Perry and Rev. Sandy O'Steen of Corpus Christi.



■ **Above**—Rev. Ralph Lasher, Rev. Jim Byrnes and Carolyn Mobley with Rev. Perry in Houston. **Left**—Rev. Perry greets Loretta and Joyce in Corpus Christi.

KEEPING IN TOUCH AUGUST 1996

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation. *Keeping in Touch* may be freely copied for distribution in UFMCC. Portions may be reprinted in UFMCC church publications, with attribution. For other distribution, please request permission. Subscriptions are free upon request. Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; 213/464-5100 Fax 213/464-2123. UFMCC Email: UFMCCHQ@aol.com. Webpage address: <http://www.ufmcc.com>. Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.

Editorial Board:

Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Moderator; Ravi Verma, Director of Administration

Team Members:

Nancy Packrell, Elsa Martinez, Dana Cagle

members who may be in Chicago to get in touch with him. He is also establishing an online directory of all MCC members online. If you would like to be included in this directory, send him a message at the email address shown above.

Dan says he is proud to be a member of UFMCC and a "political junkie." He sees his social activism as a significant part of his Christianity. Dan says, "Our government should be a reflection of us. A government that turns it back on the poor, elderly, disabled or oppressed does not represent me or my view of Christian compassion. Churches involved in politics is not the problem—the problem is most churches involved take a right-wing position on issues. It's time for ALL churches to get involved."

GENERAL CONFERENCE NATHAN MECKLEY

Boesak to Speak at Sydney Conference

World-renowned South African theologian, author and anti-apartheid activist Allan Boesak will speak at the 1997



UFMCC General Conference in Sydney, Australia.

Allan Boesak is perhaps best known for his participation in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa for nearly two decades with the United Democratic Front and the African National Congress. Reverend Boesak, an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, has also served his denomination and ecumenical organizations in many other capacities. He was instrumental in writing the *Confession of Belhar* moving the Dutch Reformed Mission Church towards union with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa in 1992, and was president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. He also served on the South African Council of Churches and as consultant to the All African Conference of Churches, as well as speaking and lecturing widely at different institutions and universities around the world.

Boesak also served as a member of the Commission on Global Governance, an independent, international commission which studies how the United Nations and other international bodies can be changed in order to respond better and more responsible

to the challenges of global governance. The report of the commission, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, has been published to critical acclaim and world-wide study.

Receiving his theological training in Africa and the Netherlands and a Doctorate of Theology from the John Calvin Foundation at the Theological University of Kampen, Reverend Boesak has received numerous awards and ten honorary degrees. He has authored more than ten books translated into many languages including, *Coming in Out of the Wilderness*, *Black and Reformed*, *When Prayer Makes News*, *Comfort and Protest*, and *The Finger of God*.

Reverend Boesak has recently moved to Berkeley, California in association with the American Baptist Seminary of the West at the Graduate Theological Union. In accepting Reverend Troy Perry's invitation, Boesak wrote that he, "admires greatly the work you do even as I regret that this particular battle is necessary at all." He further shared that he is, "honored by the invitation. The cause you represent is close to my heart and I deem it important for me to be with you."

■ **Hear Reverend Allan Boesak at the 1997 UFMCC General Conference to be held July 20 through 25 in Sydney, Australia. For travel and lodging information, contact Above and Beyond Tours at 800/397-2681. For registration or other information, contact the UFMCC offices.**

DISTRICTS SOUTH CENTRAL

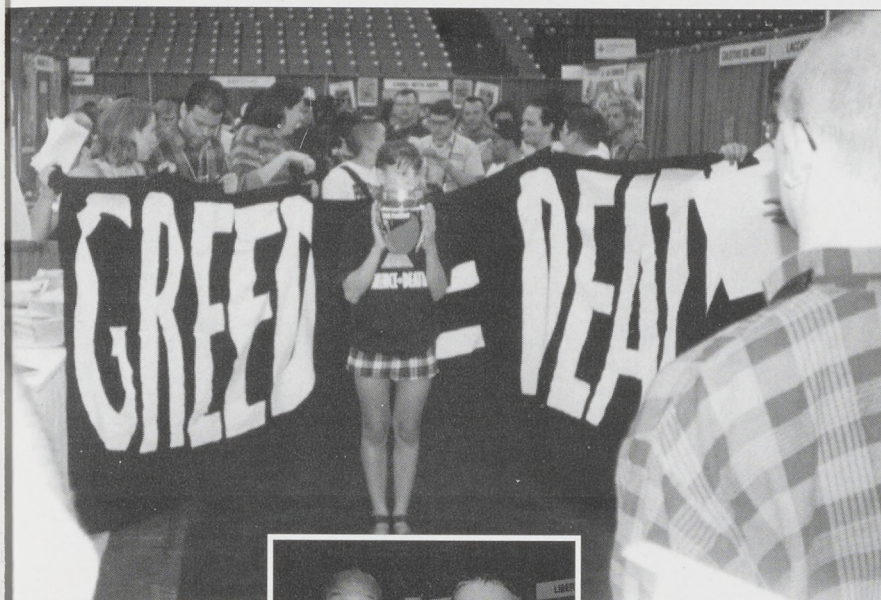
Rev. Nealy New South Central Coordinator

Rev. Eleanor Nealy became the new district coordinator of the South Central District effective July 1st. Rev. Nealy has been an active mem-



ber of UFMCC since 1983. She was a member of the MCC New York congregation as chair of the Spiritual

Development Committee, and also served the Northeast District as a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry. Before joining MCC New York, Rev. Nealy was the pastor of MCC Christ the Liberator in New



■ **Above**— "Greed=Death" banner is displayed at Vancouver conference. **Right**— Steve Wakefield from the Chicago area, and Rev. Steve Pieters from UFMCC.



Jersey. Prior to assuming her duties as district coordinator, she was employed as the director of Project Connect, a drug and alcohol program at the New York Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center.

Rev. Nealy holds a B.S. in Bible and a Bachelors of Social Work from Philadelphia College of Bible. She also has a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary and a Master of Social Work from Columbia University School of Social Work.

The new District Coordinator says this about her new district and position: "This is a district with incredible resources and diversity. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to be a partner in the ministry here."

HIV/AIDS REV. STEVE PIETERS

UFMCC Presence at AIDS Conference

Rev. Steve Pieters attended the Eleventh International Conference on AIDS in Vancouver, Canada, and distributed UFMCC AIDS Ministry resources to delegates from around the world.

The conference provided hope for prolonged life through new drug treatments. Unfortunately, these advances will only be available for 10% of the

persons living with HIV/AIDS in the world, since it will now cost an estimated \$15,000 to \$30,000 a year for the drug combinations that will control the infection.

Studies presented at the conference showed that combinations of antivirals like AZT, 3TC and protease inhibitors like Crixivan have been shown to reduce viral load to undetectable levels, and raise CD4 counts to a sustained normal level in preliminary trials. This means that for the privileged 10%, HIV/AIDS is becoming a chronic, manageable disease. It must be understood that patient compliance and tolerance of these new drug "cocktails" are necessary for this to be a reality.

Prevention efforts are working in countries where frank discussion of sexuality and needle exchange programs are accepted. The U.S. was criticized time and again for its failure to establish such programs. Immigration issues for persons with HIV/AIDS were also raised, when presenters reminded us that persons living with HIV/AIDS are not allowed into Russia, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the United States.

Other justice issues, such as access to drug treatments in "developing" countries, human rights issues, and the empowerment of women over their own lives and bodies were discussed with great vigor and anger.

Determination for global justice in HIV/AIDS issues defined much of the conference.

The first interfaith service ever held at an international conference featured dance, music, and readings from Canada's First Nations peoples, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Daily demonstrations gave opportunity to many persons to vent anger and frustration. Persons living with HIV/AIDS made increasing strides in participating and influencing the entire conference.

Women's issues were front and center, as it becomes clearer that gender inequities around the world are contributing to the continuing spread of HIV, particularly

among women. In some countries, HIV is known as a "family disease" since it kills whole families.

On a more positive note, networking opportunities were tremendous, and it was gratifying to hear over and over how MCC churches around the world are respected for their AIDS ministries.

The international scope of the conference was as overwhelming as the amount of information offered. The optimism expressed by many researchers was tempered by the awareness of how HIV is widening the gap between rich and poor, north and south, "developed" and "developing" countries.

Pieters provided daily reports on the conference over the internet to all the UFMCC churches and persons on the UFMCC AIDS Action Alert E-mail List.

VOLUNTEERS/NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Seeking Volunteers for Elders Committee

The General Council is seeking to appoint members to the Elders Nominating Committee. Two positions are open, one for a layperson and one for a clergyperson. The committee has the responsibility to receive and review any and all nominees for the Board of Elders. The committee will present the nominees at the General Conference in 1997. Please send resume to Clerk, Board of Elders at 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles California 90029. Deadline is September 15, 1996. Selection will be announced after General Council meets in October.

CLASSIFIED

Cost is \$15 for the first 25 words or less. Additional words are .70 per word. Numbers and abbreviations count as words. All classifieds must be prepaid in U.S. funds. Deadline is the 15th of month prior to publication. All copy is subject to the approval of the Editorial Board. Appearance of advertising does not imply, nor does it constitute endorsement by UFMCC. Mail ads to Keeping In Touch Classifieds, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., No. 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

MCC-Boston is seeking applicants for Senior Pastor. We are a small congregation with active lay participation and potential for growth. The position initially is part-time with expectations of moving to full-time. We are seeking a Pastor committed to inclusiveness and lay participation, who can help us grow and become more involved in the community. For more information write: Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 15590, Kenmore Station, Boston MA 02215. Deadline for application submissions is Sept. 1, 1996. Women and People of Color are encouraged to apply.

Staff Position Available: Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston TX is looking for a dynamic person to work with Cell Group Leaders, provide ongoing leadership training for interns, develop cell groups in a district area with potential for opening a satellite church. 20 hours/week initially with potential for full-time within 6 months. Excellent opportunities for growth and development using the Cell Group Church Model. For an application or more information write: Rev. Janet Parker, Maranatha Fellowship MCC, 3400 Montrose, suite 600, Houston TX 77006 or call/fax: 713-528-6756.

Position Available: Assistant/Associate Pastor in MCC Las Vegas, NV. The position involves AIDS/home visitation and Administration of bible study/affinity group management. Beginning part-time salary \$500.00 per month expected to be full time in future. Provide sacred and secular resume to: MCCLV, 1140 Almond Tree Ln, #302, Las Vegas, NV 89104-3233.

Seeking full-time compassionate pastor and spiritual leader for mid-size Church family in Palm Beach County, Florida. For more information please write: Pastoral Search Committee, Church of Our Savior, PO Box 812601, Boca Raton, Florida 33481-2601.

Welcome to the Greatland! Lamb of God MCC seeks pastor to lead small congregation with growth potential. For more information write to: Dan Carter, Pastoral Search Committee, Box 210072, Anchorage AK 99521-0072. All contacts will be kept confidential.

Northwest District seeks person with successful pastoral and administrative skills for District Coordinator beginning May 1997 for a four year term. The current District Coordinator is expected to apply. Contact NWD UFMCC DC Search Committee through Bob Buhlis, Chair, 228 Commercial St., Nevada City, CA 95959-2507 (VM 916-478-8943 FAX 916-265-3299). Deadline for application packet request is 11/15/96.

24 Henry Guesthouse is a serene, non-smoking environment close to everything in San Francisco's Gay Castro District. 1-800-900-5686 Fax: 415-864-0406

Translation Services - correction, spelling and typing of materials from English into Spanish or vice versa. Reasonable prices. Call 805-488-3147.

Attention Gay Service members! Know your legal rights: Say nothing, sign nothing, and get legal help if you are ever investigated. Call Service members Legal Defense Network for confidential counseling. 202-328-FAIR



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CHRONICLES

Top 20 Tithes

June 1996

1. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston TX 5,546.18
2. King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg FL 3,513.76
3. MCC Washington, Washington DC 2,580.91
4. St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville FL 2,363.41
5. MCC of the Rockies, Denver CO 1,944.61
6. MCC Long Beach, Long Beach CA 1,731.75
7. First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta GA 1,673.33
8. MCC San Francisco, San Francisco CA 1,624.98
9. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston TX 1,620.98
10. MCC New York, New York City, NY 1,475.87
11. MCC Charlotte, Charlotte NC 1,384.10
12. MCC Los Angeles, Los Angeles CA 1,346.74
13. Church of Our Savior MCC,
Boca Raton FL 1,326.70
14. MCC Richmond, Richmond VA 1,320.13
15. Open Door MCC, Boyds MD 1,205.87
16. MCC Charleston, Charleston SC 1,082.07
17. Agape MCC, Ft. Worth TX 1,014.36
18. MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque NM 1,012.68
19. First MCC of Kansas, Wichita KS 1,008.11
20. MCC of Greater St. Louis, St. Louis MO 998.12

(These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.)

Top 20 Per Capita

June 1996

1. MCC of Greater Hayward, San Lorenzo CA 50.03
2. MCC of the Disciples, Washington DC 40.65
3. Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton FL 37.80
4. Lamb of God MCC, Anchorage AK 37.36
5. Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston TX 35.86
6. MCC Long Beach, Long Beach CA 33.56
7. MCC Johnson County, Shawnee KS 33.16
8. Trinity MCC, Arlington TX 31.94
9. Open Arms MCC, Rochester NY 31.93
10. MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque NM 31.75
11. MCC of the Peninsula, Redwood City CA 27.39
12. Spirit Eagle MCC, Spring Valley CA 26.77
13. Gentle Souls MCC, Kansas City KS 26.13
14. Safe Harbor MCC, Memphis TN 26.01
15. MCC Knoxville, Knoxville TN 25.89
16. New Life MCC, Charlotte NC 23.30
17. MCC of the Resurrection, Houston TX 23.18
18. MCC of Northern Virginia (NOVA), Falls Church VA 22.88
19. Church of the Resurrection MCC, Chicago IL 22.58
20. Spirit Song MCC, Little Rock AR 22.05

(These figures reflect the average individual weekly offerings to the local church.)